



*The*  
**United  
Reformed  
Church**

**Eglwys Ddiwygiedig Unedig  
Synod Cenedlaethol Cymru  
The United Reformed Church  
National Synod of Wales**

**Regional Synod Meetings**

**Saturday 4th March 2016**

**Saturday 11th March 2016**

**Saturday 25th March 2016**

**Saturday 1st April 2016**

**Libanus**

**Llanfair Uniting, Penrhys**

**Rhos-on-Sea**

**Christ Well, Manselton**

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Please note that there is no agenda included in these papers as it will vary somewhat for each of the different meetings

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# 1. Notices for the Day

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## 1.1 Directions:

- a) Libanus United Reformed Church (Brecon LD3 8EW)  
The T4 bus leaves Brecon Interchange at 9.34 and 10.34. In the afternoon, the bus returns to Brecon at 3.42 and 5.15.  
From the north, take the A470 towards Merthyr and Cardiff.  
Libanus is 4 miles south of Brecon. The chapel is on the far side of the village, on your left, clearly signposted, a little before you get to the de-restriction sign.
- b) Llanfair Uniting Church, Penrhys (Heol y Waun, Penrhys CF43 3RH)  
There is a train station at Ystrad Rhondda (approximately 1 mile away) with trains from Cardiff and Pontypridd every 30 minutes, a walk of 5-10 minutes to a bus stop with buses every hour to go up the hill to Penrhys – bus times can be available from the Church Secretary ([sharon.rees58@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:sharon.rees58@hotmail.co.uk)).
- c) Rhos-on-Sea United Reformed Church (Colwyn Avenue LL28 4RA)  
The nearest train station is Colwyn Bay. Information about buses is available from the Church Secretary ([smjones2012@gmail.com](mailto:smjones2012@gmail.com)).
- d) Christ Well United Reformed Church, Manselton (Manselton Road, Swansea SA5 8PW)  
If travelling by rail to Swansea, bus numbers 25, 27, 28 and 36 stop opposite the station, run reasonably regularly and stop within spitting distance of the church.

## 1.2 Car Parking

- a) Libanus United Reformed Church  
There is ample, on-site parking. The premises are fully disable accessible.
- b) Llanfair Uniting Church, Penrhys  
The best place to park is at Y Ffynnon Centre, Heol Ioan, CF43 3NS (behind the shops), then walk through the small gate to Llanfair. There is disabled access into the chapel.
- c) Rhos-on-Sea United Reformed Church  
The best place to park is the pay and display car park opposite the church, although there is also ample car parking in nearby streets.
- d) Christ Well United Reformed Church, Manselton  
There is very limited parking at the church itself, but plenty of parking in nearby streets.

### 1.3 **Food and Drink**

Please bring a packed lunch. Tea and coffee will be provided on arrival and during the lunch break at all venues.

**\*\* Please note that homemade vegetarian soup will be available to purchase at Libanus on Saturday 4th March and that soup and a roll will be available at Rhos-on-Sea on Saturday 25th March \*\***

### 1.4 **Visitors**

Everyone is welcome to attend and participate in the Synod Meeting, although only members of Synod will be able to vote.

### 1.5 **On Arrival**

- a) **For Synod representatives:** Please collect a name badge, a printed copy of the Synod papers (if you require one) and an expenses form. You may claim the cost of public transport, or car travel at 25p per mile. Please travel with others if possible. Please complete your expenses form with your bank details and leave it in the box before you leave: payment will be made electronically soon afterwards. If you would like the Synod to claim Gift Aid on your expenses, please complete the section on the reverse of the form. Please exchange your attendance card (Appendix E) for a voting card, which should be returned at the end of the meeting.
- b) **For visitors:** Please collect a name badge and a printed copy of the Synod papers (if you require one).

### 1.6 **Children and Young People**

Young people from churches in the Synod are very welcome to attend Synod meetings alongside adult representatives from their churches and taking account of Safeguarding requirements. There will be no separate activities for children and young people on this occasion.

### 1.7 **Photographic Permission**

Permission is required for any photographs taken during Synod meeting to be shared. Forms for this purpose will be given out as necessary.

### 1.8 **Mailings**

There may be a mailing for you to collect containing some fliers. Please note that the inclusion of third party materials should in no way be interpreted as endorsement by the Synod.

### 1.9 **The next Synod Meeting is as follows:**

Saturday 14th October      The Grand Pavilion, Spa Road,  
Llandrindod Wells LD1 5EY

## 2. Synod Council

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### 2.1 Synod Purpose, Priorities and Strategy

This important and ongoing work continues to be a major focus for Synod Council, in particular,

- a) Transitional Ministry – Part-time, time limited, transitional ministries are now active in East Wales, Ebbw Vale, Cardiff and Mid Wales.
- b) Appreciative Inquiry – the Synod will be hosting a ‘Taste of Appreciative Inquiry’ training event at St. Michael’s College, Llandaff from 7th – 8th March 2017, giving several individuals in leadership positions within the Synod the opportunity to be introduced to the principles of AI.

### 2.2 Draft Welsh Language Policy

As reported to the Autumn 2016 Synod Meeting, Synod Council has asked for a policy on the use of the Welsh Language to be developed. A draft policy has now been considered and is commended to Synod Meeting (see Section 3 of these reports) for consideration and approval. ([resolution 1](#))

### 2.3 Synod Global Partnership

As reported to the Autumn 2016 Synod Meeting, ‘The global partnership with Madagascar is proving difficult to maintain. The Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries has suggested that – in the light of the existing link through Llanover, Hanover – a link with the Presbyterian Church of Korea might be fostered.’

The Moderator has subsequently reported that, following his visit to South Korea in October 2016, The Seoul Nam Presbytery have voted to make a link with URC National Synod of Wales and would like to initiate that through a visit to the UK in the second half of 2017. The Synod Council is inclined to respond positively to this overture, as a way of exploring possibilities, whilst also exploring means of rejuvenating the link with Madagascar.

### 2.4 Synod Structure

The Synod Council is considering stepping stones towards a slimmed down structure for the Synod’s committees, boards and other meetings, reflecting the current situation where fewer people are available and willing to attend meetings. It is currently anticipated that a revised structure will be available for the consideration of Synod Meeting in October 2017.

## 2.5 **More Able Church**

An application has been made to the Council for World Mission for funding, the aim of which is to distil the experience of those in leadership positions in the Synod who have experience of overcoming disability caused by the expectations of others or the environment in which they work with a view to ensuring that future deployment patterns are not discriminatory and to explore how their experiences may be shared to expand the range of those elected as local church elders. The project would also aim to share any resources and the results with other synods within the United Reformed Church and ecumenical partners within Wales.

## 2.6 **Safeguarding**

- a) Synod Council continues to receive a report on safeguarding matters from the Safeguarding Officer at each meeting, and to maintain a watching brief.
- b) The second phase of the United Reformed Church's Past Case Review during which members of the public are being invited to raise concerns formally about the behaviour, or conduct, of anyone affiliated with the URC since its formation in 1972 is still operational. To raise a concern, individuals are invited to share basic contact details by secure phone, email or web form on the URC website ([www.urch.org.uk/past-case-review](http://www.urch.org.uk/past-case-review)) by 31st March 2017. Further information can be found in the October 2016, February 2017 and March 2017 eNewsletters. Please disseminate this information amongst your congregation.

## 2.7 **Follow-up to Recent Synod Meeting Decisions:**

- a) Refugee Crisis (October 2015) – In October 2015, Synod Meeting called upon local churches to pray, give and act in response to the refugee crisis. Synod Council is aware of at least one church that has been active in welcoming refugees.
- b) Living Wage – In February 2016, Synod Meeting called upon all local churches that employ people – whether directly or indirectly – to consider accrediting themselves. Synod Council wants to support churches in responding positively to this resolution. An article appears in the March eNewsletter.

## 2.8 **eNewsletter**

Synod Council continues to review the eNewsletter at each meeting and continues to believe that it is a useful tool for communication and dissemination. Individuals are encouraged to subscribe (<http://www.urchwales.org.uk/subscribe/>) and to forward it on to others within their churches and networks.

### **3. Draft Welsh Language Policy**

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**Eglwys Ddiwygiedig Unedig**  
**Synod Cenedlaethol Cymru**  
**The United Reformed Church**  
**National Synod of Wales**

**Polisi Iaith Gymraeg**  
**Welsh Language Policy**

<h2>Cyflwyniad</h2>	<h2>Introduction</h2>
<p>Rydym yn cydnabod fod Mesur y Gymraeg (Cymru) 2011 yn rhoi statws swyddogol i'r Gymraeg a ni ddylid trin y Gymraeg yn llai ffafriol na'r Saesneg.</p> <p>Rydym yn credu ei bod yn arfer dda i gynnig gwasanaethau yn newis iaith ein haelodau a'r sawl yr ydym yn eu gwasanaethu. Rydym hefyd yn credu ei fod yn dangos parch tuag at ein gweithlu i annog a hwyluso eu dewis iaith yn y gweithle.</p>	<p>We acknowledge the fact that under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 the Welsh language has official status, and should be treated no less favourably than the English language.</p> <p>We believe that it is good practice to provide services in the language of choice of our members and those whom we serve. We also believe that it shows respect to our workforce to encourage and facilitate the use of their chosen language in the workplace.</p>
<p>Byddwn yn sicrhau ein bod yn gwneud cynnydd parhaol tuag at yr uchelgais hwn. Mae'r Polisi Iaith Gymraeg hwn yn datgan ein hymrwymadau presennol wrth ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg a hefyd, lle'n briodol, yn gosod targedau i ddatblygu ein defnydd o'r Gymraeg.</p>	<p>We will ensure that we make constant progress towards achieving this ambition, and this Welsh Language Policy sets out our current commitments in relation to using Welsh and also, where appropriate, sets targets to help us develop our use of Welsh.</p>
<p>Dylid dehongli hyd a lled ein hymrwymadau yn y polisi hwn mewn ffordd resymol - maent yn gyfyngedig i weithgareddau a gwasanaethau yng Nghymru neu sydd wedi eu darparu i bobl sy'n byw yng Nghymru, a hefyd maent yn gyfyngedig i weithgareddau a gwasanaethau yr ydym yn medru eu rheoli neu ddylanwadu arnynt.</p>	<p>The scope of our commitments in this policy should be interpreted reasonably - they are limited to activities and services in Wales or which are delivered to people living in Wales, and also limited to activities and services which we are able to control or influence.</p>
<p><b>Cyfeiriwch unrhyw sylwadau neu gwynion am y polisi hwn at:</b></p>	<p><b>Please direct any comments or complaints about this policy to:</b></p>



<p>Eglwys Ddiwygiedig Unedig Synod Cenedlaethol Cymru Minster Road, Y Rhath, Caerdydd CF23 5AS Ffôn: 029 2019 5728 E-bost: synodclerk@urcwales.org.uk</p>	<p>The United Reformed Church National Synod of Wales Minster Road, Roath, Cardiff CF23 5AS Phone: 029 2019 5728 E-mail synodclerk@urcwales.org.uk</p>	
<p><b>Dyddiad y polisi hwn:</b> xx/xx/2017</p>	<p><b>This policy is dated:</b> xx/xx/2017</p>	
<p><b>2 Delwedd Gyhoeddus</b></p>	<p>Ticiwch y blwch Tick the box ✓</p>	<p><b>2 Public Image</b></p>
<p><b>2.1 Arwyddion parhaol</b></p>		<p><b>2.1 Permanent Signs</b></p>
<p>Mae ein arwyddion parhaol yn Saesneg yn unig ond byddwn yn codi rhai dwyieithog wrth inni eu hadnewyddu</p>		<p>Our permanent signs are currently in English only but will be replaced, on renewal, by bilingual ones</p>
<p><b>2.2 Arwyddion dros dro</b></p>		<p><b>2.2 Temporary Signs</b></p>
<p>Byddwn yn cynnwys mwy o Gymraeg ar arwyddion dros dro erbyn 31.12.2017</p>		<p>We will include more Welsh on temporary signs by 31.12.2017</p>
<p><b>2.3 Enw Corfforaethol</b></p>		<p><b>2.3 Corporate Name</b></p>
<p>Mae ein brand corfforaethol yn gwbl ddwyieithog</p>		<p>Our corporate brand is fully bilingual</p>

<b>2.4 Papur Pennawd</b>		<b>2.4 Stationery</b>
Mae ein papur pennawd yn gwbl ddwyieithog		Our stationery is fully bilingual
<b>2.5 Cardiau Busnes</b>		<b>2.5 Business Cards</b>
Mae ein cardiau busnes yn Saesneg yn unig		Our business cards are in English only
Byddwn yn sicrhau bod unrhyw gardiau busnes newydd sy'n cael eu harchebu ar ôl 31.12.2017 yn gwbl ddwyieithog		We will ensure that any new business cards ordered after 31.12.2017 are fully bilingual
<b>3 Gwefan a Gwasanaethau Digidol</b>		<b>3 Website and Digital Services</b>
<b>3.1 Gwefan</b>		<b>3.1 Website</b>
Mae ein gwefan yn Saesneg yn unig		Our website is in English only
Erbyn 31.12.2017, bydd gwefan y Synod yn cynnwys tudalen gartref Gymraeg fydd yn esbonio fod yr iaith a ddefnyddir mewn eglwysi lleol yn fater i bob eglwys leol, ac yn tynnu sylw at y rhai sydd yn cynnal oedfaon Cymraeg. Gallai hefyd gynnwys dolenni i'n partneriaid ecwmenaidd sydd â gwefannau Cymraeg (e.e. Cytûn, Eglwys Bresbyteraidd Cymru, Synod Cymru yr Eglwys Fethodistaidd)		By 31.12.2017, the Synod Website should have a Welsh language home page that explains that language used in local churches is a matter for each local church and draw attention to those that have Welsh language services. It could also include links to the websites of our ecumenical partners who have a Welsh language site (e.g. Cytûn, Presbyterian Church of Wales, Methodist Church Synod Cymru)

<b>3.2 Gwasanaethau Digidol</b>		<b>3.2 Digital Services</b>
Nid ydym yn cynnig gwasanaethau digidol ar hyn o bryd		We currently do not offer digital services
<b>3.3 Cyfryngau Cymdeithasol</b>		<b>3.3 Social Media</b>
Byddwn yn defnyddio mwy o Gymraeg yn ein gwasanaethau cyfryngau cymdeithasol erbyn 31.12.2017		We will use more Welsh in our social media services by 31.12.2017
<b>4 Hysbysebu a Marchnata</b>		<b>4 Advertising and Marketing</b>
<b>4.1 Hysbysebu trwy ddarlledu</b>		<b>4.1 Broadcast Advertising</b>
Nid ydym yn hysbysebu trwy ddarlledu ar hyn o bryd		We currently do not use broadcast advertising
<b>4.2 Hysbysebu yn y Wasg Gymreig</b>		<b>4.2 Advertising in the Welsh Press</b>
Nid ydym yn hysbysebu yn y wasg or Gymraeg ar hyn o bryd		We currently do not advertise in the Welsh language press
Byddwn yn defnyddio mwy o Gymraeg wrth hysbysebu mewn cyhoeddiadau Cymreig, erbyn 31.12.2017		We will use more Welsh in our advertising in publications in Wales by 31.12.2017
<b>4.3 Hysbysebu Recriwtio</b>		<b>4.3 Recruitment Advertising</b>
Byddwn yn defnyddio mwy o Gymraeg wrth hysbysebu swyddi erbyn 31.12.2017		We will use more Welsh in our recruitment advertising by 31.12.2017

<b>4.4 Hysbysebu Awyr Agored (Byrddau Arddangos a Cherbydau)</b>		<b>4.4 Outdoor Advertising (Billboards and Vehicles)</b>
Nid oes gennym hysbysebion awyr agored ar hyn o bryd		We currently do not have any outdoor advertisements
Byddwn yn defnyddio mwy o Gymraeg yn ein hysbysebu arddangos erbyn 31.12.2017		We will use more Welsh in our outdoor advertising by 31.12.2017
<b>4.5 Cyhoeddiadau Print</b>		<b>4.5 Printed Publications</b>
Mae ein cyhoeddiadau print yn Saesneg yn unig		Our printed publications are in English only
Byddwn yn defnyddio mwy o Gymraeg yn ein cyhoeddiadau print erbyn 31.12.2017		We will use more Welsh in our printed publications by 31.12.2017
<b>4.6 Deunydd Arddangos a Marchnata</b>		<b>4.6 Exhibition and Marketing Materials</b>
Mae ein deunydd arddangos a marchnata yn Saesneg yn unig		Our exhibition and marketing materials are in English only
Byddwn yn defnyddio mwy o Gymraeg yn ein deunydd arddangos a marchnata erbyn 31.12.2017		We will use more Welsh in our exhibition and marketing materials by 31.12.2017
<b>4.7 Negeseuon wedi eu recordio a Chyhoeddiadau Sain</b>		<b>4.7 Pre-recorded Messages and Audio Announcements</b>
Erbyn 31ain Mai 2017, byddwn yn sicrhau fod neges peiriant ateb Swyddfa'r Synod yn cynnwys cyfarchiad Cymraeg. Nid ydym yn		By 31st May 2017, we will ensure that the Synod Office answerphone message includes a Welsh language greeting. We currently do not make any audio announcements.

gwneud unrhyw gyhoeddiadau sain ar hyn o bryd		
<b>4.8 Pecynnu</b>		<b>4.8 Packaging</b>
Nid oes gennym unrhyw becynnu ar hyn o bryd		We currently do not have any packaging
<b>4.9 Priso, Derbynebau a Thocynnau</b>		<b>4.9 Pricing, Receipts and Ticketing</b>
Nid oes gennym unrhyw brisio, derbynebau na thocynnau ar hyn o bryd.		We currently do not have any pricing, receipts and ticketing
<b>5 Cyfathrebu</b>		<b>5 Communication</b>
<b>5.1 Olrhain Dewis Iaith</b>		<b>5.1 Tracking Language Choice</b>
Nid ydym yn cofnodi nac yn olrhain dewis iaith ein cysylltiadau busnes ar hyn o bryd		We currently do not record or track the language choice of any business contacts
<b>5.2 Cyfathrebu Wyneb yn Wyneb</b>		<b>5.2 Face to Face Communication</b>
Nid ydym yn gallu sicrhau gwasanaeth Gymraeg, ond rydym yn croesawu defnydd o'r Gymraeg gan staff sy'n gallu gwneud hynny		We cannot guarantee a Welsh language service but we welcome the use of Welsh by staff able to do so
<b>5.3 Cyfathrebu dros y Ffôn</b>		<b>5.3 Telephone Communication</b>
Nid oes gennym yr adnoddau staff i ddelio â galwadau yn y Gymraeg ar hyn o bryd		We do not have the staffing resources to deal with telephone calls in Welsh at present

<b>5.4 Gohebiaeth (Papur ac Electronig)</b>		<b>5.4 Correspondence (Paper and Electronic)</b>
Ar hyn o bryd, yn gyffredinol, rydym yn ysgrifennu at bobl yn Saesneg		At the moment, we generally write to people in English
Rydym yn cydnabod rhyddid pobl i ohebu â ni yn Gymraeg a byddwn yn ymateb yn unol â'u dewis iaith lle bo hynny'n ymarferol bosibl		We acknowledge people's freedom to correspond with us in Welsh and we will respond in their preferred language wherever it is practically possible
Byddwn yn rhoi ystyriaeth bositif i ddwyieithrwydd wrth anfon a derbyn gohebiaeth, yn seiliedig ar natur a phwrpas yr ohebiaeth		We will give positive consideration to bilingualism when sending and receiving correspondence, based on the nature and purpose of the correspondence
<b>5.5 Ffurflenni a Dogfennau Cyfrif</b>		<b>5.5 Forms and Account documents</b>
Mae ein ffurflenni a'n dogfennau cyfrif yn Saesneg yn unig		Our forms and account documents are in English only
Byddwn yn defnyddio mwy o Gymraeg yn ein ffurflenni a'n dogfennau cyfrif erbyn 31/12/2017		We will use more Welsh in our forms and account documents by 31/12/2017
<b>6 Staff a'r Gweithle</b>		<b>6 Staff and the Workplace</b>
<b>6.1 Asesu Anghenion Sgiliau Iaith wrth Recriwtio</b>		<b>6.1 Assessing Language Skills Requirements when Recruiting</b>
Nid ydym yn asesu pa sgiliau iaith Gymraeg sydd eu hangen ar gyfer unrhyw swydd yn ein sefydliad ar hyn o bryd		We currently do not assess what level of Welsh language skills are required for any roles in our organisation

Byddwn yn ystyried a chofnodi pa sgiliau iaith Gymraeg y mae eu hangen ar gyfer pob swydd newydd		We will consider and record what level of Welsh language skills are required to perform each new position in our organisation
<b>6.2 Cofnodi a Datblygu Sgiliau Iaith ein Staff</b>		<b>6.2 Recording and Developing our Staff's Language Skills</b>
Nid ydym yn cadw cofnod o sgiliau iaith Gymraeg unrhyw aelod o staff		We do not keep a record of the Welsh language skills of any employees
Byddwn yn asesu a chofnodi sgiliau iaith Gymraeg pob aelod o staff newydd wrth iddynt ymuno â'n sefydliad		We will assess and record the Welsh language skills of every new employee as they join our organisation
Rydym yn cydnabod na ddylai'r Gymraeg gael ei thrin yn llai ffafriol na'r Saesneg yng Nghymru		We acknowledge that in Wales, the Welsh language should be treated no less favourably than the English language
Nid ydym yn cynnig darpariaeth benodol ar gyfer cefnogi staff wella eu sgiliau iaith Gymraeg ar hyn o bryd. Ond rydym yn bwriadu gwneud hynny erbyn 31/12/2017		We currently do not offer specific provision to help staff to improve their Welsh language skills. But aim to do so by 31/12/2017
<b>6.3 Cyfathrebu Mewnol</b>		<b>6.3 Internal Communication</b>
Rydym yn cydnabod bod gan bawb y rhyddid i ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg gyda'i gilydd, yn unol â Mesur y Gymraeg (Cymru) 2011, a disgwyliwn i staff barchu dewisiadau ieithyddol eu cydweithwyr ac eraill		We recognise that everyone has the freedom to use the Welsh language with each other, as enshrined in the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and we expect staff to respect the linguistic preferences of their colleagues and others.

<b>6.4 Cyhoeddiadau Mewnol</b>		<b>6.4 Internal Publications</b>
Mae ein cyhoeddiadau mewnol yn Saesneg yn unig		Our internal publications are in English only
Byddwn yn defnyddio mwy o Gymraeg yn ein cyhoeddiadau mewnol lle bynnag y mae'n rhesymol i wneud hynny		We will use more Welsh in our internal publications wherever it is reasonable to do so
<b>6.5 Meddalwedd yn Gymraeg</b>		<b>6.5 Welsh language software</b>
Byddwn yn gosod rhyngwyneb Cymraeg ar gyfer unrhyw feddalwedd newydd y mae ein staff yn ei ddefnyddio sydd â rhyngwyneb Cymraeg cydnabyddedig		We will install a Welsh language interface for any new software used by our staff which has a recognised Welsh language interface
<b>6.6 Arweiniad</b>		<b>6.6 Leadership</b>
Byddwn yn sicrhau bod y polisi hwn yn cael ei gefnogi ar y lefel uchaf o fewn ein sefydliad		We will ensure that this policy is supported at the highest level in our organisation
Fe fyddwn yn penodi un person o'r tîm uwch reoli i fod yn gyfrifol am weithredu, hybu ac adolygu'r polisi hwn		We will appoint one member of the senior management team to be responsible for implementing, championing and reviewing this policy
<b>6.7 Ymwybyddiaeth</b>		<b>6.7 Awareness</b>
Bydd y polisi hwn ar gael yn gyfleus i'r cyhoedd ei ddarllen		This policy will be conveniently available for the public to read
Bydd pob aelod o staff yn derbyn copi o'r polisi hwn ac arweiniad ar ei oblygiadau		Every member of staff will receive a copy of this policy and direction on its requirements
Bydd y polisi hwn yn ymddangos ar ein gwefan erbyn 31/05/2017		This policy will appear on our Website by 31/05/2017



<b>6.8 Adolygu</b>		<b>6.8 Review</b>
Byddwn yn asesu ac yn adolygu'r polisi hwn o leiaf pob dwy flynedd		We will assess and revise this policy at least every two years
<b>7 Gwasanaethau wedi eu darparu ar ein rhan</b>		<b>7 Services delivered on our behalf</b>
Byddwn yn sicrhau fod pob gwasanaeth newydd sydd wedi ei ddarparu ar ein rhan gan gontractwr neu drydydd parti yn cydymffurfio â'r polisi hwn		We will ensure that every new service delivered on our behalf by a contractor or third party [included in Welsh translation] complies with this policy

**Resolution 1:**

**Synod Meeting adopts the Welsh Language Policy as printed in the Synod Reports.**

## 4. Synod Elders' Meeting

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### 4.1 Ministerial Vacancies and Movements

- a) Brecon Beacons Pastorate – the Revd Michael Hodgson has accepted a call to the pastorate consisting of Walton-on-Thames and Weybridge United Reformed Churches (Wessex Synod) and will be moving during the Spring.
- b) Synod Transition and Training Officer – as it has not been possible to make appointments for either the Training and Development Officer South (TDOS) post or the Synod Transitional Minister (STM) post, Synod Elders sanctioned exploration of a link between the two posts. The Accreditation Sub-committee (which has responsibility for Special Category Ministry posts) has sanctioned the creation of a new post combining the TDOS and STM functions into a new 100% scoped post of Synod Transition and Training Officer, 50% of which will be funded as a SCM post. The new job is being advertised through the Moderators' Meeting and appeared for the first time on the February vacancy list.

### 4.2 Transitional Ministry

- a) Following the death of the Revd Paul Floe, the Transitional Ministry role in South Pembrokeshire has ceased.
- b) The Revd Samantha Caton commenced a 20% scoped (for twenty-four months) Transitional Ministry role in Ebbw Vale on 1st December.

### 4.3 Interim Moderators

- a) South Pembrokeshire – the Revd Martin Spain is serving.
- b) Torfaen Pastorate – the Revd Paula Parish-Foley is serving.
- c) Canton Uniting, Cardiff – the Revd Gareth Dyer (Baptist) is serving.

### 4.4 Ministerial Disciplinary Process – Shared Synod Panel

Further to the decision of the October Synod Meeting to join with the West Midlands, South Western and Wessex Synods in forming a Joint Synod Panel, parallel resolutions have now been passed by the Synod Meetings of the other three synods and the new panel is now in the process of becoming operational.

### 4.5 Christchurch Llanedeyrn

A call has been issued to the Revd Andrew Kleissner (Baptist).

### 4.6 Wesley United Church, Abercynon

A church meeting on 17th November resolved that the church should close. The closing service was held on Saturday 14th January.

#### 4.7 **Regional Pastoral Committees**

Further to the decision of the October 2016 Synod Meeting, Synod Elders are working towards the establishing of Regional Pastoral Committees where they are not already in operation.

#### 4.8 **PCW/URC Guidelines for Local Co-operation**

Revised guidelines have been approved by the Presbyterian Church of Wales (PCW) General Assembly and the Synod Elders' Meeting. The Ecumenical Officer has ensured that all Local Ecumenical Partnerships involving the PCW have received a copy of the revised guidelines.

#### 4.9 **Authorisation to Preside at Sacraments**

Cardiff churches have requested that any person who is authorised to preside at the sacraments in a United Reformed Church (or LEP involving the URC) in the Cardiff area be also authorised to lead any congregation in the Cardiff area in celebrating the sacraments. Synod Elders agreed in principle to this request where a Resolution has been passed by church meeting and communicated to Synod. Requests have so far been received from City and Parkminster churches.

Other regions may like to consider a similar arrangement.

#### 4.10 **Nominations**

- a) The Revd Sue Fender is now serving as the Synod's representative on the Assembly Mission Committee.
- b) Mrs Christine Roberts is now serving as Synod Lay Preaching Officer.
- c) A volunteer is still being sought for the post of Assistant Treasurer. Further details can found in the March eNewsletter, or direct from Chris Atherton ([trustsec@urcwales.org.uk](mailto:trustsec@urcwales.org.uk)).
- d) The role of Candidating Officer will henceforth be part of the job description of the Training and Development Officers.
- e) Malcolm and Barbara Shapland have had to resign as the Synod's Nominations Secretary.

## 5. District Council

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5.1 In the absence of any members of the United Reformed Church at Caersalem United Church, and pursuant to the decision of the Church Meeting of that church to declare itself solely a Baptist Church, the District Council of the Wales Synod of the United Reformed Church, properly convened and meeting on 12th January 2017, considered the following resolution in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 5 of the URC Act Schedule II, Part 1.

5.2 It was resolved that:

- a) as provided for in the Scheme of Union and the United Reformed Church Acts 1972, 1981 and 2000, Caersalem United Church should be declared closed from the date of this resolution.
- b) responsibility for the premises, other assets and artefacts will become the sole responsibility of the continuing Baptist congregation from the date of this resolution.

*Signed: Sally Thomas (Chairperson)*

*Signed: Adrian Bulley (Secretary)*

5.3 This Resolution is now commended to Synod for ratification.

**Resolution 2:**

**Synod Meeting ratifies the decision of the District Council regarding Caersalem United Church.**

## 6. Learning, Leadership and Mission Board

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- 6.1 The Board has approved amendments to the Ecumenical Officer's job description, formulated in the light of the review as reported to the Autumn 2016 Synod Meeting.
- 6.2 Following the retirement of the Revd Chris Coe, the Board has considered the future of the post of Rural Chaplain. The Board is minded to recommend to the autumn Synod Meeting that the post be discontinued, but that the Synod find other ways of supporting rural churches, playing its part in the chaplaincy team to the Royal Welsh Showground and of keeping rural issues on the agenda of the Synod and its churches. Prior to that, however, the Board invites responses to that position, both within the Regional Synod Meetings this Spring, and from churches and individuals within the Synod. Individual responses should be conveyed to the LLMB Convener, Mrs Pat Davies by 31st July 2017 ([pdaviesbarter@aol.com](mailto:pdaviesbarter@aol.com)).

### Questions for Consideration:

- **How should the Synod engage with rural issues?**
- **What experience do you have of the work of the Rural Chaplain with local churches, ecumenical partners, the farming community, rural areas and the Synod itself?**
- **How do you respond to the position of the LLMB regarding the future of this post?**

## **7. Finance and Property Board and Trust Company**

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### **Synod Treasurer**

- 7.1 A report on **Ministry and Mission Fund** arrears was received by FPB who authorised the Treasurer in conjunction with other Synod Officers to tackle each case as the opportunity arose. A number of appeals were considered.
- 7.2 FPB & Trust approved the provision of **conferencing facilities at Synod Office** and adopted a comprehensive range of **Staff Policies**. A **Staff salary review** had been carried out and where necessary additional funding to reflect increases in the budget were taken from Inter Synod Resource Sharing receipts or funds from closed churches. FPB approved expenditure up to £5,000 for redecoration and maintenance work on **Synod Office** premises.
- 7.3 **Mission Development Fund** grants of £10,000 were awarded to Stow Park, Newport; Pembroke and Barry Uniting Church. A repayable grant of £25,000 was awarded to Pembroke for emergency roof repairs.
- 7.4 **Jessie Monroe Fund** grants were awarded to Nolton Haven for £5,000; Pembroke for £3,000 and for the cost of a marquee at the Pembrokeshire County Show.
- 7.5 Grants from the **Synod Manse Fund** were approved in respect of the Dee Estuary Manse; Dyserth manse and the Ecumenical Officer Manse.

### **Trust Company Secretary**

- 7.6 The following transactions have been completed by the URC (Wales) Trust Co Ltd: Lease of part premises at *United Church in Rhyl* [Christ Church] to Denbigh CAB for 10 years from the date of completion of building work in 2017 at an initial rent of £3,500 pa; Sharing Agreements on *Bethel URC, Sketty* with the Methodist Church; Deed of Surrender for CRI on lease of basement at *St David's Uniting Church, Pontypridd* on change of tenancy.
- 7.7 **Custodial Funds** Trust approved the following resolutions:  
*Gloddaeth Uniting Church* to close custodial fund and apply towards building repairs and improvements. £170,000 declared and released under a Deed of Trust with surplus funds on closure of investment applied for purchase of fittings.  
*Sardis, Llangynidr* to close fund and apply towards cost of building repairs and improvements.

*Upper Chapel* to release funds to meet costs of next phase of work at chapel.

- 7.8 It was confirmed that arrangements to transfer the management and funds of the **Livingstone Trust** to FPB had been completed.
- 7.9 Response from the Charity Commission concerning release of endowment fund capital from the **Wallace Family** bequest indicated a complex procedure ahead. Trust approved the commissioning of legal advice in an attempt to secure success.
- 7.10 Work is underway to develop a **Property Database** which will allow FPB & Trust to be provided with accurate and comprehensive information relevant to their duties and responsibilities
- 7.11 **Rent Smart Wales** Information has been entered on the website where the Trust acts as Landlord.

### **Property Officer**

#### 7.12 **North Wales Region**

**United Church in Rhyl** the lease with the CAB has been completed to accommodate the ASK project and major refurbishment of the building is underway.

**Old Colwyn: Hall** Signed agreement reflecting terms for the repayable grant provided to Old Colwyn by Rhos-on-Sea has been received allowing Old Colwyn to progress further repairs to the Hall.

#### 7.13 **East Wales Region**

**Heads of the Valleys Pastorate** Caersalem has reverted to a Baptist Union of Wales fellowship following the resignation of the last URC member at the church, which dissolves the LEP in that church.

#### 7.14 **South Wales Region**

**Porth** the site is being advertised for sale by Cooke & Arkwright at £75,000.

**Wesley United Church, Abercynon** has closed. There is a Sharing Agreement from which we expect to be invited to withdraw from to allow the premises to be sold.

**Christchurch, Llandaff** FPB noted and Trust approved a bid from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Llandaff Scouts for the site, subject to receipt of grant funding which was expected to be clarified in April 2017 when a review would take place.

#### 7.15 **Swansea Region**

**Christ Well Manselton flat** The Church will consider how it may be able to use the accommodation in the future and has agreed to involve the Trust to provide guidance.

#### 7.16 **Mid Wales Region**

**Salem URC. Maesmynis** concern was expressed that demolition of the building to create an open worship site has not commenced.

7.17 **Carmel, Nantmel** The Trust conducted a consultation with relatives, neighbours and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to satisfy the requirements of the Charity Commission before an application could be submitted for a Scheme to permit Addoldai Cymru to acquire the redundant premises. A draft Scheme has been prepared by the Charity Commission, subject to the approval of a lease between the Trust and Addoldai Cymru.

#### 7.18 **Synod Property Committee matters**

Form 3A issued 31 October 2016 for alterations at Albany, Haverfordwest

Form 3A issued on 8 November 2016 to Tabernacle, Pembroke for lighting; heating and vents

Like for like external works at SDUC were notified to LBAC and approved on 2 Nov 2016

Tabernacle, Rhayader – letter sent requesting submission of retrospective application for consent to fix bat box to rear elevation of Church building

#### 7.19 **Synod managed property**

FPB & Trust approved the sale of **29 Brighton Road, Rhyl** once vacant possession is available at an asking price of £159,950.

**Rural Officer's manse, 2 Pentrosfa Road, Llandrindod Wells** FPB & Trust approved the property be let while further discussion takes place concerning the future of the post.

**8 Barquentine Place** FPB approved the re-designation of the manse to serve the post of Transition and Training Officer. The Trust was directed to regain vacant possession to allow repairs and redecoration to be carried out prior to the post being declared.

7.20 **Grant funding** a number of major grant making bodies have announced new schemes. Brief details have been circulated to churches in Synod Newsletters.



## 8. Positive Parenting

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### How do we promote positive parenting messages in church?

- 8.1 Being a parent is difficult. Parents face many challenges as children grow and seek to become more independent. Coping with difficult and challenging behaviour is something with which many parents struggle.
- 8.2 For many years the United Reformed Church has been part of the “Children are Unbeatable Alliance” which campaigns for a nonviolent response to behaviour issues in children.
- 8.3 The Welsh Government is currently beginning to consider changes legislation on this issue for Autumn 2017. This is to reflect the society in which we now live, which recognises that every part of society has rights, young and old, and we should respect everyone, also that we have moved on as a society in the way we deal with challenging behaviour from children. It is not about criminalising parents or making people feel guilty for how they have parented, but to keep up to date with how society has changed and in line with the messages parents are given when being advised by professionals on how to cope with a child who demonstrates behaviour which is difficult to manage.
- 8.4 As a church we should help parents to cope with difficult behaviour by promoting positive parenting messages. There are many organisations from whom we can get advice and help to achieve this, e.g. Barnardo’s, NSPCC or Action for Children.

*Judy Harris (Children and Youth Development Officer)*

#### Questions for consideration:

- **How, as churches, can we support families who struggle with behaviour issues of their children?**
- **How can we provide that support?**
- **Do we actively provide groups for parents and families where issues can be discussed and resources shared?**
- **In light of the First Minister Carwyn Jones’ statement in May 2016 promising to ‘take forward, on a cross-party basis, legislation that will remove the defense of reasonable chastisement’ what can churches do to enable better understanding of the changes?**

## 9. Calling Ministers: Honouring Past and Future

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9.1 At the Regional Synod Meetings we will be discussing how we know that a minister has been called to serve in a pastorate and how that understanding might develop to meet the challenges of the future.

### A Way into thinking about Principles and Practice

9.2 As an introduction to this discussion we will reflect on a record of decision making in the early community of disciples: **Acts 1:15-26**. It would be helpful if you could read this before you come to the meeting. Looking at the way a replacement for Judas was chosen we will consider the following questions:

- a) They identified individuals who they would choose between. What were the criteria?
- b) How was the choice made?
- c) Which elements of the process depended on the culture of the time?
- d) What part did prayer play in the process?

### Our Current Process

9.3 The process broadly involves four phases surrounded with prayer. The information is kept confidential in the first two stages so that the existing position of the prospective minister is not undermined. We call the process 'an introduction' because ministers are called by church meetings in pastorates, rather than being sent by the wider church.

#### I. Sharing of Profiles

- A. A pastorate prepares a profile which describes the mission priorities of the congregation(s) and the kind of skills and gifts they are looking for in a minister to help the church work on them. There should be a role description for a minister. The pastorate profile should be a living document kept up to date as work developed, not just prepared to seek a minister. A summary profile is circulated to the Moderators' Meeting and posted on line.
- B. Prospective Ministers of Word and Sacraments prepare a personal profile which includes descriptions of their experience, gifts, leadership style and theological outlook.
- C. The prospective minister receives the profile of the pastorate (he or she may have requested to see it based on the online pastorate profile summary, or because of personal knowledge). If they are interested in being

introduced, the minister's profile is sent to the Interim Moderator for the pastorate.

- D.** The pastorate vacancy group (which most often comprises representatives from the Elders' Meetings of the churches in the pastorate) receives the ministers' profile, considering how it matches with their pastorate profile and the kind of questions they would ask the prospective minister. The vacancy group decides whether to meet the prospective minister in person.
- E.** A minister may look at more than one pastorate profile and a pastorate may receive more than one minister's profile, but once they have decided to meet in person only one introduction can be followed up at a time. This is because the process is about discerning God's will for all concerned rather than comparing prospective ministers or pastorates. Each introduction is considered on its own merits and ministers are 'office holders' rather than employees.

## **II. Meeting in Person**

- A.** The vacancy group meets the prospective minister who also visits the churches and their communities and sees the manse. The meeting explores questions and tests how well the profiles reflect reality.
- B.** The vacancy group decides whether to invite the prospective minister to 'preach with a view' to becoming the minister of the pastorate.
- C.** The minister decides whether to accept the invitation.

## **III. 'Preaching with a View'**

- A.** A weekend is organised where the prospective minister leads worship and meets church members at social events. A brief biography may be circulated among the churches, having been agreed in advance with the prospective minister.
- B.** Church Meetings vote on whether to issue a call to the minister. Joint Church Meetings are recommended for groups so that everyone can hear what others say and pray for the Spirit to help discern the way forward. Sometimes pastorates choose to do this in different ways. A call may be dependent on reaching a pre-determined percentage of votes which is agreed locally in advance.

C. The minister decides whether to accept the call.

#### IV. Concurrence

A. The receiving synod confirms that all the arrangements are in order and 'concur with the call' made by the church meeting(s) of the pastorate. The sending synod also needs to concur with the call.

- 9.4 In each phase the pastorate or prospective minister may decide not to move forward with the introduction. Whilst the emphasis is on matching pastorate needs with the skills and gifts of the minister, in practice most people are testing whether there is the spark of a relationship which will grow into trust as the basis for pastoral care and leadership.
- 9.5 The strength of this process is that it should produce a result where pastorate and minister can have a constructive working relationship.
- 9.6 The weakness can be that people sometimes rely more on instinctive responses to a hand-shake or an accent or the way someone presents themselves, rather than depending on spiritual discernment. It may also produce a result based on what we want, rather than what we might need.
- 9.7 This process has developed by custom and practice. It gives ministers and church members a sense that they are personally involved in the process. It can create the dynamic of a developing relationship between minister and churches so that they are ready to say at the induction service that the minister is received 'as from God'.
- 9.8 However, we are entering a time when we have fewer Ministers of Word and Sacrament and pastorates formed with increasing numbers of churches.

#### **Things to consider ...**

- 9.9 Congregations are 'emotional systems' which behave more like families than bureaucratic organisations, and accepting a new leader involves embracing them as part of the interplay of relationships that make up church life. Many of our solutions to changing patterns of ministry have not taken sufficient account of this.
- 9.10 As churches come together out of convenience or geographical proximity to share ministry, there is no saying that they will all find the same person to fit their needs.
- 9.11 There tends to be an assumption in pastorates that once a minister has been called and inducted they become 'our' minister. Despite clauses in

terms of settlement agreements to the effect that alterations to the scoping of the pastorate may be necessary in time, in practice any such alterations are fraught with difficulties. Looking to the future we need to ensure that flexibility is built into our system of deploying ministers.

- 9.12 With stipendiary Ministers of Word and Sacraments becoming a scarcer resource, we need to be able to ensure that they are being used most effectively and where the need (i.e. mission opportunities) are greatest. This will inevitably involve regular oversight by Regional Pastoral Committees, with the possibility that re-deployment may be necessary.
- 9.13 In multi-church pastorates, choosing where a prospective minister will 'preach with a view' involves pastorate politics and unspoken assumptions about power. We need skilful Interim Moderators who can recognise and address these kinds of issues, but we find it difficult to find people willing to serve as Interim Moderators.
- 9.14 In multi-church pastorates, arranging a joint church meeting at a time when a broad range of people can attend is also fraught with difficulties. Arranging several appropriately chaired church meetings in a short space of time is also cumbersome.
- 9.15 Whilst there may be some local variations, the broad phases of an introduction need to be consistent across the United Reformed Church so that ministers are treated fairly and consistently.
- 9.16 Ministers are ministers of the whole church as well as serving in local congregations. Ministers are servants of God's good news in the community as well as in churches.
- 9.17 The process described above has developed during a period when ministers spent the majority of their time in pastoral care and preparing and leading worship based in particular congregations. In our society today we may need different models to connect with people of different ages and expectations.
- 9.18 We have a number of posts where an interview process by an appointment group results in a recommendation to a council of the church. These include our Synod Moderator and Synod officers. We still believe that this appointment process is discerning God's call on the life of the person appointed and a call from 'the church' to be a servant of God's mission.
- 9.19 Papers have been presented to Mission Council which suggest that we should change the 'locus of call'. This could mean that rather than the pastorate calling and the synod concurring, an appointment group might 'call' and the pastorate church meeting(s) 'concur'. (The paper on call is reproduced in these Synod Meeting papers as Appendix A).

## Appendix A:

# Understanding Call and its Practical Implications

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1. Being called is fundamental to any understanding of discipleship. If we see the church, at every level, as a community of disciples, then we need to consider how we are called and what a call may require of us. Clearly there are many things we may say about being part of the church, but this is essential and recognised in our talk of the 'priesthood of all believers' or the 'ministry of the baptised'.
2. However, we also need to take account of those specific calls that come to some. At induction services, and sometimes on other occasions, we normally say some variation of: *"Christians share, through their baptism, in the ministry of Christ, and all Christians are called to be ministers of God's love. God calls some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some to be pastors and teachers, to equip the Church for the work of ministry and to build up the body of Christ."*
3. We may see a call as something that can happen on the journey of faith. God has a role for each one of us. Recognising a call will be part of an ongoing discernment as to where God is taking us.
4. Biblically there are many stories that engage with the question of responding to God's call. To take just two examples of the many that would be possible, though involving fourteen people:
5. ***Elizabeth and Mary:*** The difference that God's call makes is reinforced in the stories of Elizabeth and Mary (Luke 1). Mary's response to Elizabeth's blessing is to sing the Magnificat with its clear message of reversal, change and justice. Although the best manuscripts attribute the song to Mary, as has the church traditionally, some suggest the song may be Elizabeth's and that ought to be considered possible. The form and content of the Magnificat closely resemble Hannah's song (1 Samuel 2:1-10) with its implications for Samuel's call and it is Elizabeth's story that parallels that of Hannah. The Magnificat is a radical reflection of the call to which both women responded, despite potential damage to their status, in view of Elizabeth's age and Mary's singleness. Their specific call is to motherhood, but it has wide-ranging implications. As Sharon Ringe points out, in her commentary on Luke, this song could "never be confused with a calming lullaby being rehearsed by two pregnant women ... God's faithfulness to God's promises, and to those people or peoples with whom God is joined in covenant, is at the heart of Luke's theology." This then raises the question of the link between call and covenant.

6. ***Jesus' Call to Discipleship:*** When we consider the call of Jesus to the twelve disciples we see that the original call is to the whole, unqualified, task of discipleship, but authenticated in terms of specific calls to specific tasks. This is well demonstrated in the passages recording the call to discipleship. In Mark 1:16-20, 2:13-17, 3:13-19 (and parallels) the general call to discipleship is made, but is subsequently particularised in various ways, for example in the sending out, recorded in 6:7-13. The original call is to commitment. As Ched Myers, in his commentary on Mark states: "The call of Jesus is absolute, disrupting the lives of potential recruits, promising them only a 'school' from which there is no graduation." The first call to discipleship in Mark is an urgent, uncompromising invitation to "break with business as usual." The call to specific tasks is the means of practising the general call to discipleship, but offers the possibility of variety in response whilst the general call requires only an affirmative commitment. The call described in Mark 6 is different from that in the earlier passages which we have mentioned in its particularity. As Edwin Broadhead says in his commentary on *Mark*, referring to this section of chapter 6: "Their mission and message stands, in essence, in the place of Jesus ... The Twelve have thus been elevated to a decisive role in the arrival of God's Kingdom; through their ministry the work of Jesus is multiplied and is broadcast to the villages of the Galilee."
7. Many other examples could be cited, and the normal pattern, as in these ones, is of a broad view of call as a basis, then focussed in the particular.
8. URC practice with respect to the call to ministry fits this pattern. There are normally four partners in any call, these being God, the individual being called, and two conciliar confirmations. Most often the individual is called by the Church Meeting (or Meetings) and that is confirmed by the concurrence of the synod (often delegated to its pastoral, or equivalent, committee.) However, there are several variations which are recognised as entirely appropriate and valid. Any who occupy those Assembly posts that must be held by a minister – Synod Moderators, Secretary for Ministries, General Secretary – are 'called' via an appointing group and an Assembly resolution (sometimes delegated). Appointments in some Special Category Ministry (SCM) posts, chaplaincies, etc. are made by an appointment group and this is then concurred by synod. Non-stipendiary (NSM) post-holders are appointed by the synod though, in practice, in those situations where an NSM is being appointed to a pastorate the synod will often encourage the local congregation to go through a calling process. That effectively amounts to the synod issuing the call and seeking concurrence from the local Church Meeting – though that language will not normally be used.

9. We need to distinguish between the 'call' to the ministry within the church as a whole and the 'call' to a particular task. Additionally, we need to recognise that for most ministers the call will not come as part of the 'one church, one minister model', which provides the basis for current practice. A significant majority of ministers have pastoral oversight of two or more churches and a small, but not insignificant, number of ministers are being inducted to posts other than as minister of a church. Therefore, we need to recognise the possibility of moving the "locus" of the "commissioning" (i.e. the "call" to specific work).
10. This raises questions both of practice and theology. If calling is purely a cosmetic exercise, it is not worth doing. It also raises questions about how we understand God's call. If what we want to suggest does not fit our theology of call, it should not be considered. However, if a change in how we arrange the calling process is both theologically appropriate and practically helpful, we should consider whether that is what God is now saying to the church.
11. In our conciliar structure it is important to ensure the appropriate role for each of the Church's councils. We should not seek to achieve flexibility of ministry, however desirable that may seem, by disregarding the significant role of the local congregation. However, it is worth considering whether this can be sustained by other means.
12. We are disciples together. This theme of call relates to questions of collaboration. My call is a response to God and to a particular calling (or appointing) body. Call is for the moment, until needs change. Congregations are also collectively responding to the call of God. Would it make things easier (more appropriately flexible) for both ministers and congregations – and also perhaps for synods who have the role of overseeing the deployment of ministers – if the "normal" view of call were reversed, so that the call came from the synod and the local congregation or congregations were invited to concur, with the option of that concurrence being moved to a different pastoral configuration should that be needed and agreed in the light of changing circumstances?
13. This paper suggests that such a possibility is worthy of consideration. We recognise that such a change could be seen as nothing more than re-arranging the deckchairs on the Titanic. However, we want to affirm that the intention is far more profound than that. Such a change in thinking, if taken seriously, could facilitate different models of ministry and allow us to get on more easily with many of the things that General Assembly has been saying over the past 25 years or so. Indeed, it might be the catalyst that really challenged us to do just that. Probably the two prime examples of such things are the impossibility of continuing to put



stipendiary ministry in absolutely every congregation and the need to establish local leadership in every congregation.

14. At least five reasons may be posed in support of such a suggestion.
15. First, the general understanding is that the primary call is to ordination which is validated by a call to a particular task. Ordination and a first induction happen on the same occasion, but it is clear that the ordination precedes the induction. A minister is then inducted to subsequent pieces of work. Ordination is once, but inductions may be several. To focus the prime “locus” on call at a grouping wider than the current pastorate could be the logical implication of this understanding.
16. Second, this could recognise, and be of practical assistance, in coping with the rising variety of combinations of congregations and/or other tasks to which ministers are called. As groups, clusters, teams etc. continue to develop, it may prove necessary to modify certain aspects of the relationship between a minister and a particular congregation.
17. Third, popular thinking that the call is to the local church implies that this is the sphere of the prime relationship. Whilst there is a sense in which this must be so, there is, paradoxically, an ultimate sense in which it is not so. Ministers are responsible to the synod, which has the responsibility “to exercise oversight of all ministers.”
18. Fourth, we live in a society of rapid change and the church needs to change and adapt in response. Placing the prime “locus” of call at a wider level would increase the opportunity of a more rapid response to changing circumstances. This would enable a flexible response to the changing needs of churches and ministers and allow for a proper response to what God is saying to both the minister and the church, which will never be static, but retaining sensitivity to the circumstances of both.
19. Fifth, it might be a helpful way of moving towards a fuller and popular understanding of our (actual, rather than folk) ecclesiology – viz. that we are congregations of the one conciliar United Reformed Church.
20. If it did become the case that the synod issued the call and the local congregation(s) concurred that would involve change in both thought and practice, though it is probable that the initial practical difference would be minimal.
21. However, this could create a number of possibilities. For example, some ministers find the timing of a move is more heavily influenced by family considerations (e.g. spouse’s job, children’s education, elderly parents) than by ministry/church factors. This proposal would make it a lot easier

to move to a new post without a geographical relocation for the family and may thus enhance stability in particular parts of a synod.

22. It would have helpful implications for churches in times of vacancy as the synod would need to introduce appropriate arrangements to cope with their vacancy. This ought to happen already though the system of appointing interim moderators, but anecdotal evidence suggests that, in many cases, local congregations are left floundering.
23. It should contribute a sense of cohesion. On the one hand, it is exciting that, in various synods, significant attempts to address questions of mission, ministry and deployment are being made and we all ought to be ready to learn from each other. On the other hand, it is disturbing that, in a relatively small denomination, we may be heading towards such diversity that the church becomes unrecognisable from one part of the country to another. Policy that permits flexibility, with both creativity and cohesion, seems desirable.
24. Such a move would raise several practical questions. The key question is that of the effect on the process of seeking a new minister. It is already the case that there is a wide variety of forms of co-operation, so the requirement would be to extend this and, in part, simply to recognise the reality already existing. It is probable that synod (through its pastoral (or equivalent) committee) would appoint the church(es) that were part of the pastorate to form the substantial part of the searching process, though with wider representation and consultation.
25. One practical question would be around manses. Practice currently varies as to those synods which operate a manse scheme, those where local churches or pastorates retain full responsibility for manses, and those with a mixed economy. The possible change in the locus of call fits most easily with a wider adoption of the first of these.
26. Another question might be the possibility of still having one church, one minister in places and there is no reason why a one church pastorate would not still be possible. Problems would also arise when linked churches found themselves unable to work together. It is difficult to legislate for such situations which would need tremendous pastoral sensitivity – but it could not be claimed that such would be something new!

*Paul Whittle*  
*Convener, URC Ministries Committee*